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(54) Video game machine

(57) A video game machine wherein a user plays a card game on payment of money. It is not possible to win money by playing the card game as the return from the machine has a maximum value of the user payment to play the game. In the card game, a number of cards are displayed and a score is given for the combination according to the rules of poker. If a sufficiently good "hand" is achieved the game is continued in the form of a card value game where a user guesses the value of a comparison card displayed face down relative to an initial card displayed face up.

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At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

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"Improvements in and relating to video game machines"

The present invention relates to video games and in particular to those which are played in public places.

It is known to provide a video game machine which is  
5 played by a user in the hope of winning money. Generally speaking, little skill is involved in playing the video games and gambling is the essential feature. US Patent Specification No. 4,560,161 (Tagasago) and UK Patent Specification Nos. 2,169,737 (JPM) and 2,169,736 (JPM)  
10 describe various video card game machines. Generally speaking, little skill is involved and the machines are played in the hope of winning a prize.

The present invention is directed towards providing a video game machine which provides amusement for a player  
15 and which does not involve gambling.

According to the invention, there is provided a game playing method for a video game machine comprising the steps of:-

receiving a user payment of currency or tokens  
20 representing currency;

the combination card game comprises the sub-steps of:-

displaying a plurality of playing cards ;

assigning a score to the displayed cards  
according to the combination of cards;

5 displaying a drawn card in place of one of the  
cards ;

assigning a score to the displayed cards  
including the drawn card;

10 repeatedly displaying a drawn card in place  
of a displayed card a number of times up to a pre-  
set maximum number of times; and

assigning a score to the displayed cards each  
time a drawn card is displayed.

Such a combination card game is very interesting and  
15 involves both an element of chance and also skill as a  
user must make decisions with regard to the drawing of  
cards.

Ideally, a card value game is initiated if a pre-set score  
is achieved by a user at the combination card game.

in the card value game according to the combination of cards displayed.

In this way, a bonus score may be achieved, purely on chance as a user cannot determine the cards which are displayed in the card value game.

Preferably, the combination card game, and/or the card value game are played according to the rules of poker.

Poker is a popular game and its rules are generally well known. Accordingly, this arrangement would be convenient generally.

The video game of the invention may alternatively take the form of a quiz game or possibly a game of the fruit machine type. Indeed, it is envisaged that any type of game may be played as long as the maximum return is a refund of value less than or equal to the user payment.

The invention will be more clearly understood from the following description of a preferred embodiment thereof given by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a video game machine according to the invention;

Referring now to Fig. 3 the operation of the video game machine 1 is illustrated. In this embodiment, the machine is programmed to allow the playing of a card game, which is initiated on reception of a user payment indicated in step 20 of Fig. 3. The playing of the card game is indicated at step 21 and the control unit 4 assigns a score according to user success at the game at step 22. If a pre-set score is achieved the machine dispenses a refund of value up to but not greater than the user payment. The game is then ended. Alternatively, if a pre-set score is not achieved the game is ended without payment of a refund. The steps of dispensing a refund and of ending the game are indicated by the numerals 23 and 24, respectively.

It will be appreciated that by directing the playing of a video game in this way, the video game machine of the invention may not be used for gambling and will be played for amusement only. The machine, however, has the advantage over conventional amusement machines in that a refund may be obtained of value up to but not exceeding the user payment.

Referring now to Figs. 4 and 5 the step 21 of playing the card game is illustrated in more detail. In step 21(a) five playing cards are displayed face up (see Fig. 5 (a)). The control unit 4 (at step 21 (b)) then assigns a score to

user in the combination card game is doubled and the card value game may be repeated. The card value game may be repeated each time the user guesses correctly until five cards are displayed face up on the video display 2. When this happens, the five cards are cleared from the display and the fifth card is displayed on the left side of the screen as an initial card for a further card value game. The procedure is then repeated until there is a second set of five cards displayed face up as illustrated in Fig. 5 (c). The user is assigned a score in step 21 (j) if first and/or second set of five playing cards displayed face up forms a desired poker combination. The video game refunds currency or tokens representing currency of a value up to, but not exceeding that of the user payment according to the user score at the end of the game. It will be noted that if a user opts to "stand" at any time i.e. not proceed with another card value game when this is possible, a refund may be obtained of value according to the score achieved at that stage.

Although a card game has been described, it is envisaged that any type of game may be played, for example, a quiz game or a game of the "fruit machine" type. The important feature is that a player does not receive a prize but instead may obtain a refund of a value up to but not exceeding that of his or her payment. It is envisaged, for example, that if the game is a quiz game statements will be displayed on the video display 2 and the user will

If more than one game may be played on the video game machine these may be either interconnected or completely separate.

cards (21c);

assigning a score (21b) to the displayed cards including the drawn card;

5 repeatedly displaying (21c) a drawn card in place of a displayed card a number of times up to a pre-set maximum number of times; and

assigning a score (21b) to the displayed cards each time a drawn card is displayed.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 further comprising  
10 the steps of initiating and playing a card value game (21f) if a pre-set score is achieved by a user at the combination card game.

4. A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein playing the card value game (21f, 21g) comprises the sub-steps of:-

15 displaying an initial playing card face up;

displaying a comparison playing card face down;

receiving a user guess as to the value of the comparison card relative to the initial card;

ending the game if the guess is wrong or, if the



dispensing of a refund of maximum value up to, but not exceeding that of the user payment according to user success at the video game.

11. A video game machine as claimed in claim 10 in  
5 which the video game is a combination card game in which a set of playing cards is displayed (21a) on the video display unit (2) and a score is assigned (21a) to the cards according to the combination of cards; and in which a user may replace a card with a drawn card (21c) up to a  
10 maximum pre-set number of times, the machine assigning a score (21c) to each set of cards displayed.

12. A video game machine as claimed in claim 11 in which the machine initiates a card value game (21e, 21f) if a pre-set score is achieved by a user at the  
15 combination card game.

13. A video game machine as claimed in claim 12 in which an initial card is displayed face-up and a comparison card is displayed face down and a user guess may be received as to the value of the comparison card  
20 relative to the initial card, and in which the game is ended (21h) if the guess is wrong or, if the guess is correct, the user score is incremented and another card value game may be initiated.

14. A video game machine as claimed in claim 12 in

tokens representing currency and a payment game which is initiated only with user payment of currency or tokens representing currency; and means for judging user success at each game.

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20. A game playing method for a video game machine, substantially as described with reference to the drawings.

21. A video game machine substantially as described with reference to the drawings.

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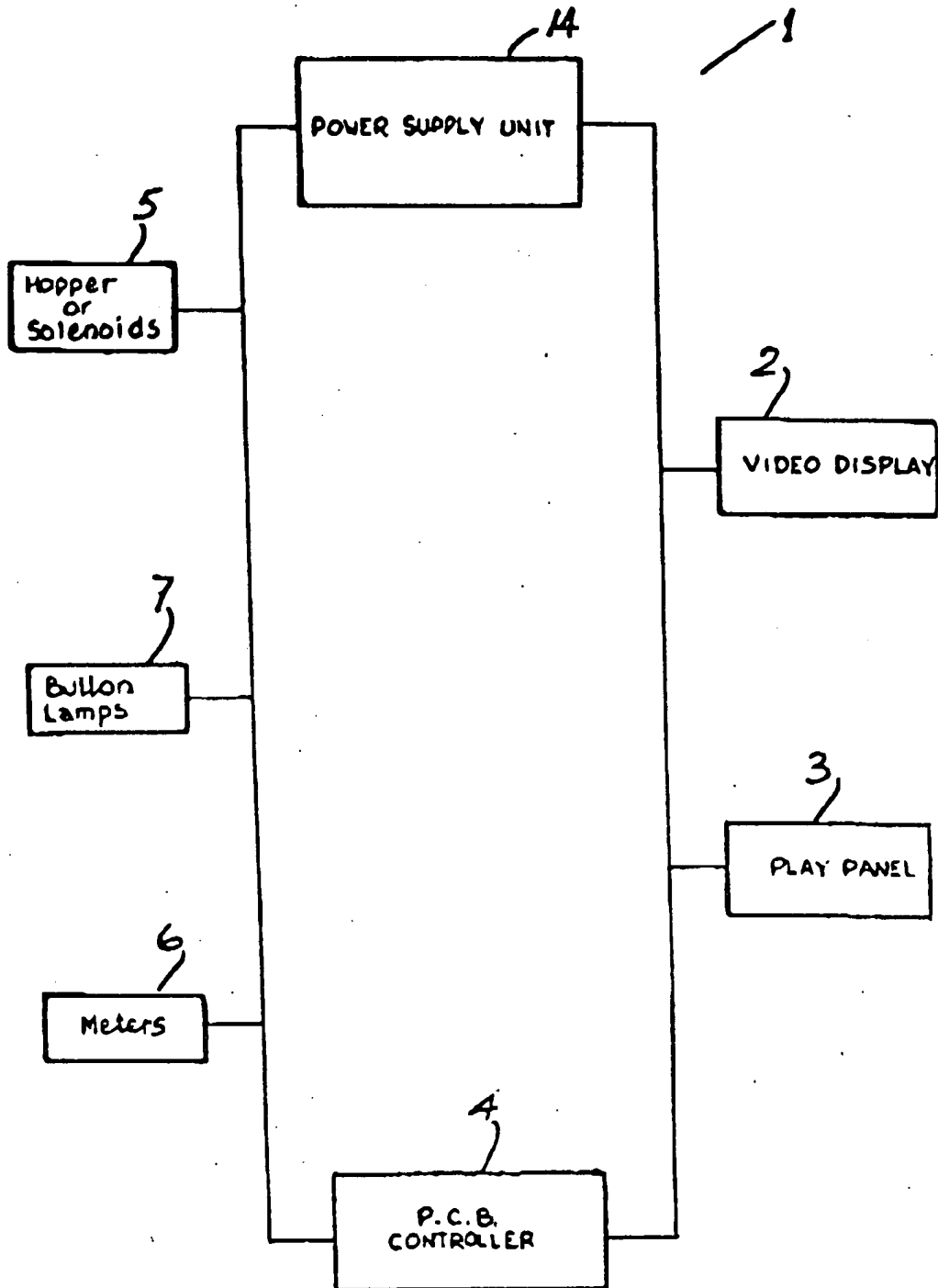


Fig. 1

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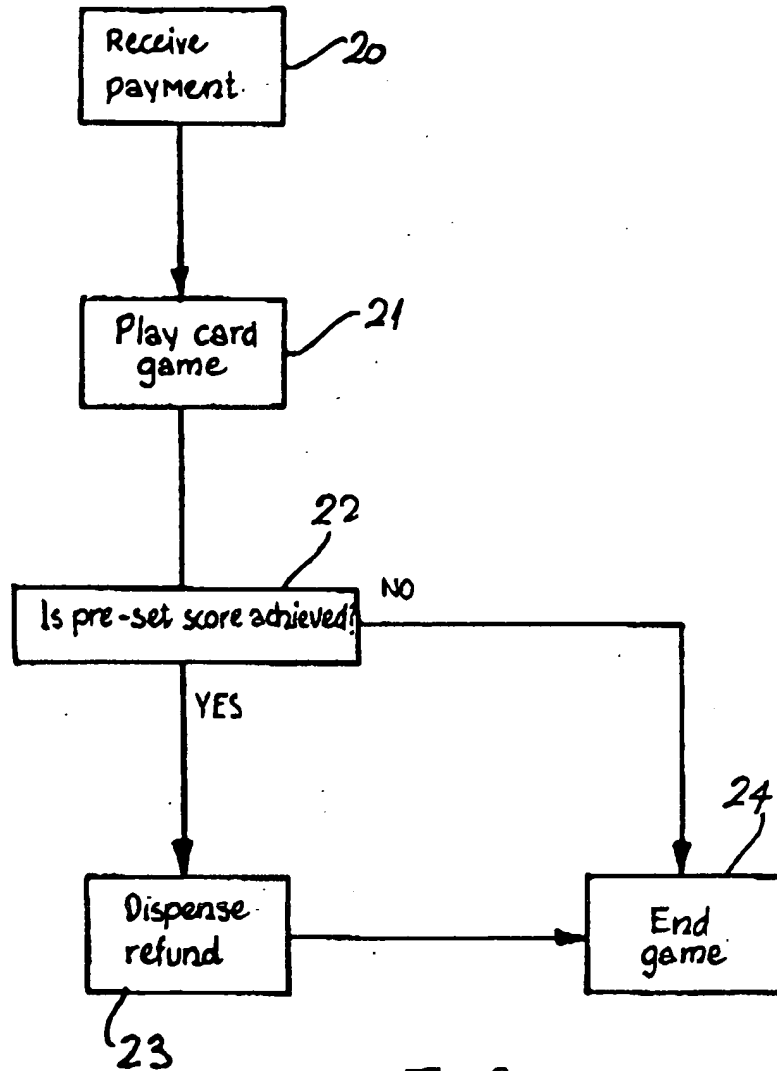


Fig. 3

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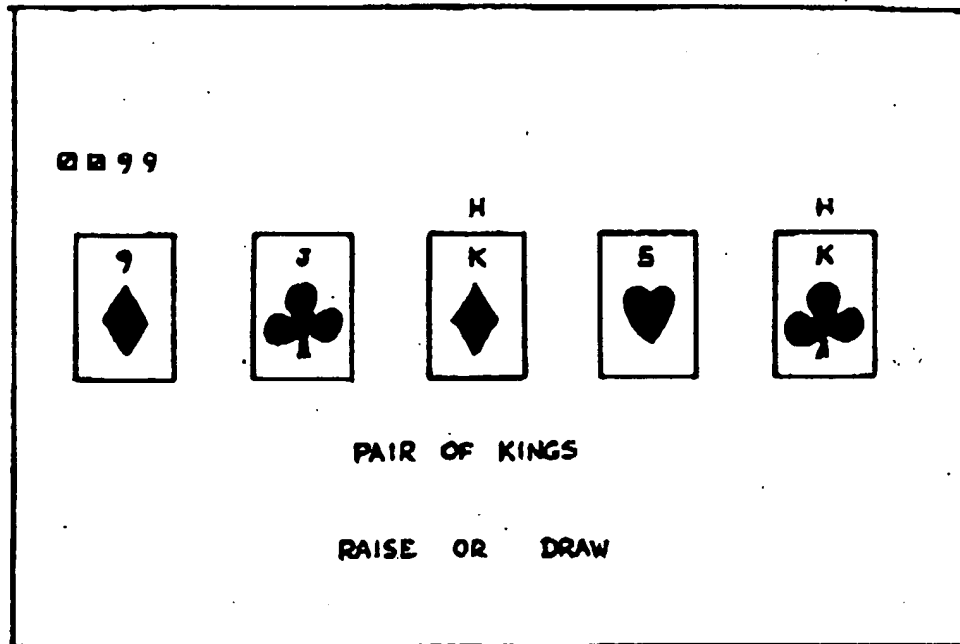


Fig. 5a

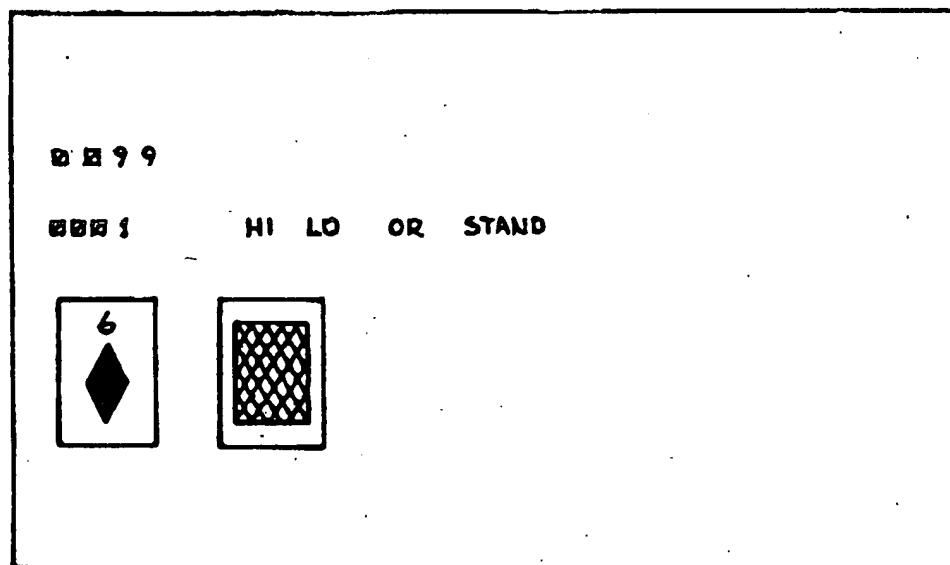


Fig. 5b

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